



# ***Rodney's Take***

May 24, 2021

## **I Asked How We Could Entice Potential Parents... You Answered!**

On May 10, I laid out the issue of couples in the U.S. having fewer kids. I asked for input on enticing potential parents to “get busy” so that we can get our birth rate at least back up to replacement levels. I suggested a few outlandish ideas to get the ball rolling, like flat-out lying to potential parents about how kids really make you wealthier and don’t wreck your schedule or giving parents a pass on cutting in line at the airport. I even suggested hitting nonparents with a half-million-dollar tax for not doing their part for society by raising two kids.

Those ideas weren’t serious. I then asked for ideas, from the light-hearted to the practical, since no government on the planet has figured it out yet. We received hundreds of responses. Dixie suggested that I ask Elon Musk, since he has many great ideas. Jim suggested letting families live tax-free. James suggested telling Millennials and Gen Z that they aren’t allowed to have kids, which would motivate them to have kids out of spite.

There were a number of other light-hearted suggestions. However, most of the responses we got were quite serious. I’ll summarize a few consistent themes, but I’m not picking winners. I’ll leave you to decide if any of them would solve our issues.

## **What's the Problem?**

Several people questioned the premise, which I applaud! Before rushing to “fix” something, I always ask if the situation at hand is a problem, an opportunity, or just noise. With 330 million people in the U.S and 7.5 billion on the planet, we're already polluting and overusing finite resources. We should be working to restructure our economy so that we don't need a growing population to support our social payments (such as Social Security and Medicare, which rely on workers through payroll taxes). Making a lifestyle choice to have one less child decreases a person's greenhouse gas emissions more than any other choice they can make.

## **Increase Immigration**

Following the theme of the first point, many of you noted that we could solve a potential labor shortage and baby bust by allowing more immigration. There are more than enough people on the planet, they're just not geographically located near economic opportunities. By improving our immigration policies, we could help people who live in dire circumstances while also addressing our pending economic issues.

## **End Abortion**

Yes, this is a hot-button issue, but it was also a consistent theme, so I'm including it. More than 60 million abortions have been performed in the U.S. since the procedure became legal roughly 50 years ago, although in recent years, fewer than one million abortions have been performed annually. Outlawing or severely curtailing abortion could boost birth rates.

## **Raise Incomes**

The costs associated with having children are so high that families often need two incomes to make ends meet. We have priced ourselves out of demographic growth by allowing wages to stagnate as costs moved higher, all but eliminating the choice of having one parent stay home.

## **Raise the Status of Motherhood**

We have developed a societal view that women achieve success solely by means of professional pursuits. By diminishing the value of motherhood, we've made that choice less attractive. The combination leads women to choose professional advancement over family formation, thereby hindering demographic growth. Just as we applaud and respect women for achieving success in the business world, we should praise them for raising the next generation.

## **A Few Other Interesting Responses**

One reader suggested that we go back to a more agrarian society, albeit with modern technology and conveniences. He pointed out that kids are useful in farming families and that growing just a portion of your own food can be physically rewarding, can reduce your food bill, and can improve your diet. Another reader suggested that men needed to improve their child-raising skills so that they could be of more help, while a third reader suggested that women aren't making serious commitment choices, which leads men to forgo relationships.

Thanks to everyone for the feedback!

Rodney

*Got a question or comment? You can contact us at [info@hsdent.com](mailto:info@hsdent.com).*